over a six-week period this summer, college coaches evaluated approximately 2500 bowlers at the Turbo 2-N-1 Collegiate Expo (Chesterfield MI), Junior Team USA Trials (Las Vegas), and the USBC Combine (Arlington). These three events provide the best opportunity for coaches to evaluate many players in one location while providing parents and players access to learn more about opportunities after high school.

In reality, most youth bowlers have not had the opportunity to have their skills and knowledge evaluated for readiness for college bowling. Accordingly, in this month’s Slowinski at-large, I provide an evaluation model that could be used anywhere in the world to assess youth players in regard to their potential for becoming a college bowler.

With this intent, I provide some easy-to-implement assessment measures to test versatility, accuracy, and repeatability on the lanes. I also provide a scoring system for measuring academic work ethic and coachability, two things college coaches are looking for when evaluating players.

The total assessment provides an overview of a bowler’s recruitment potential by determining strengths and weaknesses. The assessment can be used during discussions with coaches as well as to form the foundation of a practice plan for each bowler. At bowlingthismonth.com/extras, you will find a copy of this assessment and its scoresheet. You can use it, along with your videos, transcripts, essays, and letters of recommendation, to bolster your presentation to prospective coaches.

Important non-bowling skills

As coaches of elite college programs, we are looking for attributes above and beyond bowling. Specifically, we seek out players who possess a strong academic work ethic, are coachable, and possess emotional control. These three characteristics are important to enable an individual to reach their full potential.

Academic performance

All colleges reward excellence in the classroom by offering academic scholarships above and beyond the bowling scholarship amount. At Webber International, we believe a championship player requires mental discipline. To be

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on our traveling team, you must earn a semester minimum of 2.5. To achieve excellence in the classroom, one must have an outstanding work ethic on a daily basis. By consistently earning good grades, an individual is symbolically informing coaches that he or she is a disciplined worker who is ready to be equally disciplined on the lanes or in conditioning.

A little known fact is that college admissions staff weight the academic performance of the last two years of high school more than the overall academic performance when determining acceptance. Admissions counselors want to see improvement and growth over high school rather than decline. If your overall GPA is less than you want but you have been steadily improving, send your transcript to the coaches of programs in which you are interested as a way to demonstrate improvement over time.

Based on your current GPA, use the following table to determine your academic work ethic score of the recruitment preparation score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.75 of better</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.50 – 3.74</td>
<td>80 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.25 – 3.49</td>
<td>60 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 – 3.25</td>
<td>40 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.75 – 2.99</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.50 – 2.74</td>
<td>50 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00 – 2.49</td>
<td>40 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) When my bowling coach identifies a mistake and informs me how to correct it, I take it personally and feel upset.
   - Always (0)    Often (5)    Neutral (10)
   - Infrequently (15)   Never (20)

2) When my bowling coach gives me feedback, I become angry rather than feel that he or she helped me.
   - Always (0)    Often (5)    Neutral (10)
   - Infrequently (15)   Never (20)

3) If my bowling coach is critical, I correct mistakes without getting upset about it.
   - Always (20)    Often (15)    Neutral (10)
   - Infrequently (5)   Never (0)

4) I will improve my skills by listening carefully to advice and instruction from my bowling coach.
   - Always (20)    Often (15)    Neutral (10)
   - Infrequently (5)   Never (0)

5) I bowl much better if I do things on my own.
   - Always (0)    Often (5)    Neutral (10)
   - Infrequently (15)   Never (20)

**Evaluating bowling skills**

At an elite program, coaches seek not only bowlers who are already functioning at a high level but also those who strive to become the best they can be, regardless of their current skill level. Individuals who are passionate about growing and learning about the sport are excellent candidates for college bowling at a program that stresses core development.

The WTBA (World Tenpin Bowling Association) Technical Committee’s Congress Report determined that to answer the question, “Who is the best bowler?” you would need to
review five components: versatility, accuracy, power, repeatability, and knowledge. Here are several simple tests to measure your versatility, accuracy, and repeatability.

**Versatility test**

How quickly can you adjust to hit the pocket from anywhere on the lane with one bowling ball? This will test your ability to change ball speeds, axis of rotation, and rev rates. To get a true college recruitment preparation score, complete this test on sport bowling conditions.

Outside the 5th board
- ____ attempts to hit the pocket 10 times
- Between 5 and 10
- ____ attempts to hit the pocket 10 times
- Between 10 and 15
- ____ attempts to hit the pocket 10 times
- Between 15 and 20
- ____ attempts to hit the pocket 10 times
- Between 20 and 25
- ____ attempts to hit the pocket 10 times
- Between 25 and 30
- ____ attempts to hit the pocket 10 times
- Inside of 30
- ____ attempts to hit the pocket 10 times

Scoring 70 / ____ attempts = %
(percentage is the score)

In which zones of the lane did you perform best? Worst? Why? What skills and knowledge (speed, axis of rotation, rev rate, ball layouts) do you need to improve your weakest zones?

**Accuracy and repeatability test**

From Computer Aided Tracking data, we know that professional bowlers have all of their ten shots within a range of 1.7 boards at 15 feet. Specifically, the range between their furthest shot right and the furthest shot left is equal to or less than 1.7 boards. Down the lane, at the breakpoint, professional bowlers are within three boards, left and right, over the ten shots.

Most bowling centers do not have a Computer Aided Tracking System (CATS). Accordingly, you will need to utilize another simple method to assess accuracy. In short, you can measure accuracy and repeatability with two pieces of tape in the front part of the lane and two pieces down the lane. To get a true college recruitment preparation score, complete the test on sport bowling conditions.

**Accuracy test at 15 feet**

At 15 feet, which is at a distance equidistant to the far end of the second arrow, put two pieces of tape where you are playing the lane so that two boards are between the two pieces of tape. Take ten shots watching the ball go through the tape. If possible, do the test with an observer for increased accuracy.

Shot 1: Between tape without touching tape?
- ____ Yes (1)  ____ No (0)
Shot 2: Between tape without touching tape?
- ____ Yes (1)  ____ No (0)
Shot 3: Between tape without touching tape?
- ____ Yes (1)  ____ No (0)
Shot 4: Between tape without touching tape?
- ____ Yes (1)  ____ No (0)
Shot 5: Between tape without touching tape?
- ____ Yes (1)  ____ No (0)
Shot 6: Between tape without touching tape?
- ____ Yes (1)  ____ No (0)
Shot 7: Between tape without touching tape?
- ____ Yes (1)  ____ No (0)
Shot 8: Between tape without touching tape?
- ____ Yes (1)  ____ No (0)
Shot 9: Between tape without touching tape?
- ____ Yes (1)  ____ No (0)
Shot 10: Between tape without touching tape?
- ____ Yes (1)  ____ No (0)

Repeat this test three times for a total of 30 shots to measure accuracy score at 15 feet.

**Accuracy percentage at 15 feet**

Total earned points ____ / 30 = %
(percentage is the score)
**Accuracy test at the end of the pattern**

At the end of the pattern, place two pieces of tape where you want the ball to go so that three boards are between the tape on the left and right. Take ten shots watching the ball go through the tape. If possible, do the test with an observer for improved accuracy.

Shot 1: Between tape without touching tape?  
_____ Yes (1)    _____ No (0)

Shot 2: Between tape without touching tape?  
_____ Yes (1)    _____ No (0)

Shot 3: Between tape without touching tape?  
_____ Yes (1)    _____ No (0)

Shot 4: Between tape without touching tape?  
_____ Yes (1)    _____ No (0)

Shot 5: Between tape without touching tape?  
_____ Yes (1)    _____ No (0)

Shot 6: Between tape without touching tape?  
_____ Yes (1)    _____ No (0)

Shot 7: Between tape without touching tape?  
_____ Yes (1)    _____ No (0)

Shot 8: Between tape without touching tape?  
_____ Yes (1)    _____ No (0)

Shot 9: Between tape without touching tape?  
_____ Yes (1)    _____ No (0)

Shot 10: Between tape without touching tape?  
_____ Yes (1)    _____ No (0)

Repeat this test three times for a total of 30 shots to measure accuracy score at the end of the pattern. To measure progress, complete this test many times over months as well as on various lane conditions.

**Accuracy percentage at end of pattern**

Total earned points _____ / 30 = %  
(percentage is the score)

**Spare shooting test**

As most know, to be successful at the highest level a bowler must improve their spare shooting skill set. To evaluate spare shooting skill, complete six sets of the following ten shot test for a spare conversion score based on 60 total shots.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shot</th>
<th>Spare alley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7 pin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8 pin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9 pin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10 pin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2-4-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3-6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5 pin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Brooklyn pocket</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Spare Shooting Score**

Conversion # _____ / 60 = %  
(percentage is the score)

**Total recruitment preparation score**

- Academic work ethic  
- Coachability  
- Versatility  
- Accuracy and repeatability at 15 feet  
- Accuracy and repeatability at the end of the pattern  
- Spare shooting  
- Total score

**Conclusion**

With this bowling evaluation, you can determine your strengths and weaknesses. That will help you develop an improvement practice plan as well as provide data for prospective college programs. For a more in-depth evaluation, visit a professional training center such as the Kegel Training Center (Florida), Turbo Tech (Chesterfield MI) or the International Training and Research Center (Arlington) where world-class coaches can evaluate your game with Computer Aided Tracking and video analysis as well as teach you the knowledge needed to take your game to the next level.

**References**
